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UNCLAS COLOMBO 000461

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SA/INS
PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL PTER IZ CE

SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION/ASSISTANCE
REGARDING POSSIBLE KILLING OF SRI LANKAN NATIONAL IN IRAQ

¶1. This is an action request. Please see Para 4.

¶2. On March 3 the Embassy received a letter from a Member of Parliament requesting assistance with the repatriation of remains of a Sri Lankan national believed to have been killed in Iraq on February 11. According to the letter, Dewamullage Prasanna Rohan Perera, who was employed by a private company in Dammam, Saudi Arabia as a driver, was killed in Amzainda, Iraq as he was driving a truckload of materials to an unspecified location in Iraq. Information provided to his next of kin by his co-workers and employer reportedly indicates that Perera's body is being held at an "American Base Hospital" in Baghdad. The letter identified Mohamed Saeed Al Ajvi, P.O. Box 5827, Dammam 31432, Saudi Arabia, as Mr. Perera's employer.

¶3. Poloff contacted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to determine what steps the Government of Sri Lanka (GSL) may have taken to verify the report and/or repatriate Mr. Perera's remains. Sitara Khan of the Consular Department reported that the GSL had requested its embassy in Kuwait to follow up on the matter. According to Khan, the Sri Lankan embassy in Kuwait had heard the same reports of Perera's remains being in an American military hospital somewhere in Iraq but had been unable to obtain further details or to verify that information. Instead, the embassy suggested the Ministry of Foreign Affairs contact the U.S. Embassy in Colombo for help; Khan said her department had been awaiting further instructions before doing so.

¶4. As we understand it, the GSL has received no official notification from any source of Perera's death and is relying on the (sketchy) information provided by Perera's co-workers.

Action Request: We would appreciate any information addressees might provide on this report so that we may respond to the MP and the Ministry. In the event that Perera's remains are indeed at an American or Iraqi facility, please advise how the GSL may repatriate the remains to Sri Lanka.

¶5. Minimize considered.

LUNSTEAD